

REMARKS

Claims 1-10 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, the drawings and claim 1 are amended. Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

Applicants gratefully appreciate the indication that claims 6-10 contain allowable subject matter.

The Office Action objects to the drawings. The drawings are amended to overcome the objection by adding the label "Conventional Art" to Figs. 6A, 6B, 7 and 8 and by removing the label "3" in Fig. 6B. Accordingly, withdrawal of the objection to the drawings is respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-5 under 35 U.S.C. §102(a) over Kunimochi et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0117792). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

In particular, Kunimochi fails to disclose or suggest a spread illuminating apparatus that includes at least one light source, a light conductive plate and a light converging means disposed between the at least one light source and the light conductive plate, as recited in independent claim 1. Support for this feature can be found in the specification at, for example, paragraph [0022] and Fig. 1.

Kunimochi teaches a spread illuminating apparatus that includes a light conductive plate, a bar like lamp disposed along and close to an end face of the light conductive plate, a light reflection pattern and a light dispersive-reflection pattern (Abstract). However, as indicated in Figs. 1, 11, 12 and 13, the light converging means 12 is not disposed between the light source 5 and the light conductive plate 2. Accordingly, Kunimochi fails to disclose or suggest each and every feature of independent claim 1.

Moreover, the Office Action alleges that Kunimochi teaches that an optical path conversion means has a refractive index profile in a direction orthogonal to the two major

surfaces of the light conductive plate (Office Action, page 4, lines 7-11). Applicants respectfully disagree. In particular, Kunimochi teaches that the optical path conversion means 12 has "a plurality of grooves shaped triangular in section, and is adapted to guide to the light, which is emitted from the light source 4 into the light conductive bar 3, toward the end face 8 of the light conductive plate 2 in a substantially uniform manner" (paragraph [0008]). Accordingly, because the refractive index profile of Kunimochi is constantly changing in direction, the refractive index profile is not in a direction orthogonal to the two major surfaces of the light conductive plate, as recited in independent claim 1.

Furthermore, the Office Action alleges that Kunimochi teaches a light conductive plate disposed so as to face toward one end surface of the at least one light source (Office Action, page 4, lines 1-3). However, the light source 5 in Kunimochi is not placed in such a manner as to make the optical path conversion means 12 placed between the at least one light source and the light conductive plate 2, as recited in independent claim 1.

For at least these reasons, Kunimochi fails to disclose or suggest each and every feature of independent claim 1. Thus, independent claim 1, and its dependent claims, are patentable over Kunimochi. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection of the claims under 35 U.S.C. §102(a) is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-10 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachment:
Replacement Sheets

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Amendments to the Drawings:

The attached replacement drawing sheets make changes to Figs. 6A, 6B, 7 and 8 and replace the original sheets with Figs. 6A, 6B, 7 and 8.

Attachment: Replacement Sheets